

## **Ginny Kilgore Honored with Public Service Award**

*By Elaine Pugh*  
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UNIVERSITY, Miss. – Catherine V. “Ginny” Kilgore of Oxford, an attorney with North Mississippi Rural Legal Services, has been recognized for her dedication to serving the indigent.

Kilgore – who oversees delivering legal services to the disabled and elderly in 39 north Mississippi counties – is recipient of the University of Mississippi School of Law’s 2002 Public Service Award. The award was announced recently at a dinner, held in Kilgore’s honor and hosted by law school Dean Samuel M. Davis, who presented her with an engraved plaque.

“Ginny Kilgore is a public servant in the truest sense,” said Davis. “Her selection continues the tradition of this award in recognizing those who have labored in the trenches, with little or no compensation but with great professional and personal satisfaction in helping to bring justice and equality to those who need it most.”

“This award means a great deal to me,” Kilgore said, pointing to others so honored. “The work of those who received the award before me has been so important; I feel very honored.”

After earning bachelor’s and master’s degrees in education and a few years teaching, Kilgore enrolled at the UM law school. Upon graduation in 1975, she entered private law practice in Oxford, joining NMRLS in 1978.

Since then, she has earned promotions from managing attorney, senior attorney, then director of the Council on Aging project. Since 1990, she has worked in the Administrative Law Unit and Resource Development, and directed the Elder Law Project, serving the northern half of the state.

She also is an adjunct professor in the UM law school’s Civil Law Clinic. She held a similar post a few years ago in the school’s Elder Law Clinic.

Kilgore says she’s found her niche. “I’ve always thought it was important to do work to help people. I really enjoy it. The issues I’ve dealt with through the years have been on the side of helping people maintain the basics of life – home, health care, jobs and family.”

She says her desire to serve others was sparked early, growing up in a single-parent home, aware that her widowed mother faced certain challenges as she supported her four children through public school and college. Not the least of those difficulties, however,

occurred outside the home.

“I was inspired by my mother,” Kilgore said. “She ran across some discrimination in the workplace during those years, and I never forgot that. She challenged us to think and form opinions about events occurring in our country during those times in the ‘60s, as we sat around the table at the evening meal.”

Among her other awards, Kilgore was recognized by the Mississippi Bar Association with its 2000 Legal Services Lawyer of the Year Award.

Previous recipients of the law school’s Public Service Award are other UM law alumni: Forest attorney Constance Slaughter-Harvey; Luther Ott, formerly director of Stewpot Community Services in Jackson; and Bobby DeLaughter, the former district attorney who spearheaded the prosecution of Medgar Evers’ assassin Byron De La Beckwith.